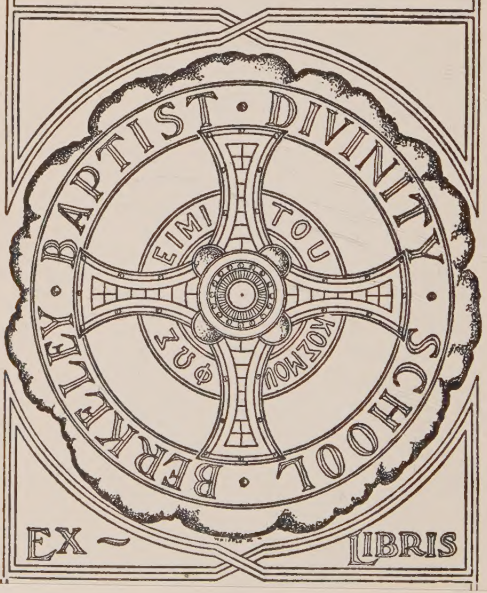
The Faith of our Fathers.

BX
6231
W55
1930
GTU
Storage

Rev. F. J. WILKIN, M.A., D.D.

THE
SANDFORD FLEMING
LIBRARY



Gift of
Dr. Sandford Fleming

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/faithofourfather0000unse_v8h6

The Faith of Our Fathers.

SHORT SKETCHES OF BAPTIST HISTORY
FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

By Rev. F. J. WILKIN, M.A., D.D.

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

Printed by the Australian Baptist Publishing House Ltd.
545 George Street, Sydney.

BX
6231
W55
1930

BERKELEY BAPTIST DIVINITY SCHOOL
SANDFORD FLEMING LIBRARY

CONTENTS.

		Page
I.	Foundation Principles	5
II.	The Paulicians—Baptists in the Early Centuries	10
III.	Peter of Bruys: or Baptists Before the Reformation	14
IV.	Peter Waldo and the Waldenses	18
V.	Baptists in Switzerland 400 Years Ago	22
VI.	Balthasar Hubmaier, Martyred March 10th, 1528	26
VII.	Menno Simon and the Baptists of Holland	35
VIII.	The First English Baptist Church	39
IX.	The Long Fight for Freedom	43
X.	An Old Church Minute Book	47
XI.	More Extracts from an Old Church Minute Book	52
XII.	Vavasour Powell, the Evangelist of Wales	56
XIII.	Roger Williams, the Champion of Liberty	60
XIV.	William Carey, the Father of Modern Missions	65
XV.	Beginning of the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of America	69
XVI.	Johann Gerhard Oncken, the Apostle of Germany	73
XVII.	Baptists in the Life of the World To-day	77

37719

The Faith of Our Fathers.

I.

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES.

Any thoughtful young Christian is bound to ask to-day: Why are there so many different Churches? The trend of thought and activity to-day is towards unity. Science ever seeks to find unity amid diversity; in philosophy dualism is giving place to monism; politically the nations are being leagued together, and here in Australia the Federal spirit is fusing the different States into a Commonwealth. So the question becomes insistent: why should the Churches be out of harmony with the spirit of our times? Why should they maintain their separate existence?

At the outset we gladly admit that in the greater essentials the Churches are one. They all hold that the Christian revelation of God is final, that the work of Christ and the presence of His Spirit are the only redemptive forces for the world, and that the Christian Church is the

divinely-appointed agency for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. Then, since this is the case, why should the Churches allow any doctrine or purpose to divide them? Since all join in singing, "We are not divided, all one body we, one in hope and doctrine, one in charity," why should our separate organisations seem to contradict our words?

We also readily admit that unless a Church can give good reasons for its separate existence it is guilty of schism, and deserves the reprobation of all good men. Unless some vital principle is at stake, the separation of Church organisations cannot be defended. Then the question at once emerges: Is the Baptist Church separated from other communions on any vital principle? Before we answer that question, we would say that we are not vitally separated from other Churches, we are one with them in faith in Christ and in Christian fellowship. We can and do worship and work with them in all places and in all departments of Christian activity. We endorse the words of an Abbess of Port Royal, "I belong to the order of all saints, and all the saints belong to my order." As in an archipelago all the islands are connected beneath the seas, so all Churches have a real underlying unity. But with this fact in mind, can we still justify our separate organisation?

We may reply that in common with all the different Churches, we have historical reasons for our separation. In former days, and in other lands the separation of Baptists from other Churches was the inevitable result of their protest against beliefs and customs they deemed contrary to the Word of God. Our Baptist Churches have a long heroic history, of which we are proud. But years have brought new conditions, and we grant that we ought not to maintain any historical institution simply

because it is ancient. If it has outlived its usefulness it ought to be abandoned. There was a time when the Baptist protest and witness was necessary, and we ought calmly to face present-day facts and ask if it is necessary to-day, or, in other words, ask if we maintain any principles which are not adequately maintained by other communions?

Possibly we may find an answer to the question if we consider in what respects we differ to-day from other Churches. Nearly all Churches may be grouped in two classes, generally known as National and Free Churches. In the division of National Churches we may include the Greek, the Roman and the Anglican Churches. For the present we may omit the Greek Church, and simply ask in what respects we differ essentially from the Roman and Anglican Churches. It will suffice if we affirm that we differ from the Roman Church because in that Church the government is in the hands of a great Hierarchy. The rights of the individual are ignored. The people have no voice in the government of the Church. But, what is more important, the priest comes between the soul and Christ. All grace is mediated by the priest and the sacraments he administers. Baptists believe in the direct approach of the soul to Christ. With many of the doctrines of the Church of Rome we are in full agreement, but we cannot accept its priestly system.

We differ from the Anglican Church, among other things, because of its close alliance with the State. Recent events illustrate and emphasise this fact. The Church rightly desires to revise the Prayer Book that has been unaltered since 1662, but cannot do so without the consent of Parliament, and that consent the House of Commons has

twice refused to give. Baptists believe that the State has no right to legislate for the Church. Their rallying cry is—a free Church in a free State.

But in this contention they are at one with all the Free Churches, and the question remains, wherein do we differ from these? We reply, chiefly because they virtually set on one side the practice of believer's baptism and substitute for it the practice of infant sprinkling, a rite totally different in subjects, made and meaning. These Churches protest against the substitution by the Roman Church of the Mass for the Lord's Supper, and yet act in a similar way when they substitute infant sprinkling for the immersion of believers.

For these reasons we are compelled to maintain our separate organisation. Not in any Pharisaic mood, nor in any lighthearted spirit do we remain separate from others. We fully recognise our oneness with them in Christ, and will co-operate with them in all evangelistic work, but feel we must still insist on the great principles maintained by Baptists ever since the Apostolic days, viz.:—(1) The Personal Union of the soul with Christ; (2) The complete freedom of conscience; (3) The authority of the New Testament for the faith and practice of the Church. Though we recognise that in whole or part these principles are held by other communions, we believe they are co-ordinated by the Baptist Church as by no others. We claim to be heirs of numberless heroic men and women who, amid disability and suffering, protested against any departure from the faith of the early Church. We recall the stories of the host of martyrs who, in prisons and at the stake, laid

down their lives for the truth of Christ, and can only pray that we may be as loyal as they to our Saviour King.

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

To remind our young people of their splendid heritage, the following stories are re-told.

II.

THE PAULICIANS—BAPTISTS IN THE EARLY CENTURIES.

Some enthusiasts claim that the Baptist churches can show an unbroken succession from the days of the Apostles to the present. It is affirmed that all the churches we read of in the New Testament were practically Baptist churches in that they consisted only of believers in Christ, that all believers were baptized, and that each church was virtually independent of all other churches. They thus resembled in practice and polity the Baptist churches of to-day.

But when an attempt is made to trace the succession right down the Christian centuries it fails, and it should be frankly admitted that many unbridgeable gaps occur. The attempt should not be made. It is unnecessary, and is based upon a principle that Baptists do not accept. Faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him do not depend on any outward connection with Apostolic times.

A Christian Church is found wherever any believers in Christ unite for fellowship and service. They may know nothing of any other community. Taught by the Word of God, regenerated by the Spirit

of God, and united in love, they constitute a Christian Church. "Where two or three are gathered in My name," the Master said, "there am I in the midst of them." This is a description of a Christian Church. Where Christ is, there is the Church. There is no Church where He is not. Such a Church can be established at any time in any land, quite independent of any other organisation. So we are not at all concerned to prove that Baptist churches have existed in an unbroken line from the great Pentecostal days. The true succession is the possession of Apostolic faith and power. The sacred fire may die down, but it can be re-kindled as at the first.

Still, it is a simple fact of history that again and again, in different lands, groups of believers have appeared who, to all intents and purposes, closely resemble the churches of the New Testament days and the Baptist churches of to-day. One of the oldest and most interesting of these communities has been long known as that of the Paulicians, and of recent years much more is known of them than formerly. Popular knowledge of them was previously drawn from the 54th chapter of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," but in that chapter the historian says that, in his opinion, the writers he quotes had written with prejudice and passion. Happily, in 1893, a traveller in Armenia, Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., found a copy of the manual of the Paulicians called "The Key of Truth," and from this book their history and beliefs can be clearly learned.

In very early days the Paulicians were numerous in Armenia, and claimed that their churches were of Apostolic origin. Their faith spread from Antioch and Edessa right through Mesopotamia and

Persia. The "Key of Truth" says: "As the holy universal and apostolic Church, having learned from our Lord Jesus Christ did proceed; so also must ye, after them do as we said above. For they first taught; secondly asked for faith; thirdly induced to repent; and after that granted holy baptism to those that were of full age."

In Gibbon's history, the founder of the Paulicians was said to have been a young Armenian named Constantine, who received a copy of the New Testament from a Christian deacon who was fleeing from the Mahommedan persecution in 660 A.D., but the "Key of Truth" disproves this story. The Paulicians were much earlier. Still Constantine was apparently one of their most energetic leaders in the seventh century, and through his efforts the numbers of the Paulicians were greatly increased. This increase attracted attention and led to persecution. Constantine was stoned to death by order of the Byzantine emperor in 690, and the Empress Theodora is said to have urged on a persecution in the ninth century in which 100,000 Paulicians were put to death. Because of this persistent opposition, the Paulicians emigrated in large numbers to Bulgaria and Serbia, and in all probability were the forerunners of the Albigenses in France and Italy. To this extent a succession can be traced from the Apostles down to modern days.

Their enemies, as quoted by Gibbon, had charged the Paulicians with holding the Manichaean errors regarding the creation of the world by an evil power, and the consequent evil of all matter, but the "Key of Truth" disproves this charge. The discoverer of the book writes, "And now I at last understood who the Paulicians really were. All who had written about them had been misled by the Greek writers,

who describe them as Manichaeans. I now realised that I had stumbled on a monument of a phase of the Christian Church so old and so outworn, that the very memory of it was well nigh lost."

The Paulicians did not accept the Episcopal system that developed in the Western Churches into the Papacy, but their teachers were all of equal rank. There was only one order in their ministry, and their ministers were elected by the people. They rejected the baptism of infants and practised the immersion of believers. It is plain that in essential beliefs and practices they resembled the Baptists of to-day. The discovery of the "Key of Truth" corrects many references to the Paulicians in Church histories and goes far to prove that the Baptist Witness has been given from the earliest days down to our time. Though not connected, the beacon fires flash the light from one mountain height to another.

III.

PETER OF BRUYS, OR BAPTISTS BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

In the beginning of the 12th century, students flocked from all parts of Europe to Paris to attend the lectures of Peter Abelard, the Canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. The lecturer was young, eloquent, famous for his learning, and it is on record that thousands of young men listened eagerly to his teaching. Abelard is chiefly remembered to-day for his fine insistence on the manifestation of the Love of God in the death of Jesus Christ.

One of Abelard's pupils was a young man, also named Peter, and known to history as Peter of Bruys. Very little is known of his early life. It is said that he had been a priest, and was converted by the reading of the Bible. Attention had been called to the errors of the Church of Rome by Berengar, the learned Principal of the Cathedral School of Tours, in France. He affirmed boldly that baptism and the Lord's Supper were of value only to those who had faith in Jesus Christ. Such teachings at that time were unusual, and awakened great interest. His followers are reported to have numbered 800,000.

Berengar died in 1088, and twenty years later Peter of Bruys was preaching similar doctrine in all the South of France. In all the villages and towns of several Provinces for fully twenty years he exercised a wonderful influence. People flocked to hear him as they did to hear John the Baptist, and in great numbers were baptized in the rivers of France.

Peter's great opponent was the venerable Abbot of Cluny, who wrote, "The first article of the heretics denies that children below the age of reason can be saved by the baptism of Christ; and affirms that another's faith can do those no good who cannot yet exercise faith of their own, since according to them it is not another's but one's own faith, which, together with baptism, saves, because the Lord said, 'Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The Abbot also charges the followers of Peter with saying, "We await an age capable of faith, and after a man is prepared to acknowledge God as his and believe on Him, we do not, as you slander us, re-baptize him, but baptize him."

This was connected with Peter's teaching that the Church consisted only of those who had been born again by the Spirit of God. He went on to deny the practices of the dominant Church. He condemned the worship of images, and fasts and penances endured for the sake of winning salvation. He opposed the celibacy of the priests, denied the claims of the Pope to be the head of the Church, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The country must have been ready for such teaching. Peter was brave, earnest, and eloquent, and results followed such as accompanied

the preaching of his great namesake, the foremost Apostle of our Lord. It is said that whole Provinces in the South of France were turned upside down. It was a Reformation like to that under Luther's preaching 400 years later. The truth mightily prevailed. The whole movement was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and of the power of the Word of God.

In their enthusiasm it is possible that some of the followers of Peter went to extremes. They are said to have pulled down churches and burnt the images and crucifixes. On a certain Good Friday the people brought all their wooden crosses and made a bonfire of them, and by the fire they roasted meat, which they afterwards ate as a sign that they were no longer bound by the prescriptions of the Church. It was a Springtime of freedom and of faith. One cannot but recall a similar scene in Florence when, in 1497, at the bidding of the great Reformer, Savonarola, the multitudes who were swayed by his preaching, burnt their "vanities" in the great square of the city.

It was not probable that Peter would escape the vigilance of his enemies. He was labouring in the very region of France where a bitter persecution was waged against the Christian Church, near the end of the second century, when men and women, young and aged, died for their faith. Similar fiery trials came upon the Baptists of the 12th century, and in 1126, when Peter was preaching at St. Gilles, he was suddenly arrested, hurried to the stake, and in a chariot of fire he went to God. As a heretic this intrepid Baptist preacher was burned to death. His so-called heresies are the truths Baptists hold to-day.

But though the leader was silenced his work was carried on by a man of even greater energy and eloquence, Henry of Lausanne, the beautiful Swiss town on the Lake of Geneva. The historian thus describes him: "He had all the attributes to deeply impress the people, great dignity in personal appearance, a fiery eye, a thundering voice, a lively step, a speech that rushed forth impetuously as it flowed from his heart, and Bible passages were always at hand to support his addresses." Soon was spread abroad the report of his holy life and his learning. The people heard him gladly. The churches were neglected, the priests were angered, and the Pope ordered that Henry must be stopped.

In 1148 this great Baptist leader was captured, brought before the Council of Rheims, at which Pope Eugenius III. presided. He was condemned as a heretic to perpetual confinement and hard fare in a neighbouring monastery, where he soon died. But the work of Peter Bruys and Henry of Lausanne was well done, and prepared the way among the Alpine valleys for another Peter.

IV.

PETER WALDO AND THE WALDENSES.

Our last sketch told of the death of Henry of Lausanne about the year 1150. Ten years after God raised up another great leader, whose monument has been placed by the side of Luther's in the great memorial at Worms. This man was Peter Waldo, and the story of his life is of fascinating interest. He was born in Dauphine on the Rhone in France and in time became a rich merchant in the historic ancient city of Lyons, a city noted then and since for its silk manufacture.

When, at a feast, a friend suddenly collapsed and died by his side, Peter Waldo was led to think seriously of life's value and meaning, and in 1160 yielded himself to Christ. Years afterwards it was the sudden death of a friend who was struck dead by lightning that led Luther to most serious thought. Peter, in his anxiety, asked a man learned in the Scriptures the way to heaven, and was told that there are many ways. "But" said Peter, "which is the surest?" and was answered, "'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." Unlike the young man who first heard these words from the Master's lips and who went away sorrowful, Peter fully acknowledged them and literally obeyed them.

He paid all his debts, gave his home and vineyard to his wife, made provision for her and his daughters, and then began a quiet, useful life spent in relieving the wants of the poor. Men thought him mad, but his mind was calm and his heart at rest. Presently he employed able men to translate the Gospels from the Latin Vulgate into the language of the district in which he lived. Then, with some like-minded men, he went from town to town distributing the Gospels and preaching the glad tidings of Jesus Christ. These preachers became known as "the Poor men of Lyons." They renounced all worldly prospects, lived in poverty, and spent all their days in circulating and explaining the Gospels. In spirit and method they resembled "the companions" of Buddha, "the Little Brothers" of Francis of Assisi, and "the Poor Priests" of Wycliffe.

At first Peter and his friends did not directly oppose the doctrines and practices of the Roman Church. When the Bishop of Lyons asked why they preached and expounded the Scriptures without the authority of the Church, they replied, "We ought to obey God rather than man; Christ commanded His disciples to preach." Since he could not persuade them or compel them to stop preaching, the Bishop excommunicated them in 1176 for preaching without authority.

Peter would not accept this decision, but went to Rome and laid the matter before the Pope's Council. The Pope treated Waldo with kindly consideration, commended him for his vow of poverty, and gave him permission to preach on condition that the local priest requested it. Since such a request was unlikely, the permission was a virtual

prohibition. But Peter and his companions would not yield, and they went everywhere preaching the Word.

This provoked the action of Rome, and at a Council in 1183 the preachers were excommunicated, because they dared to preach without authority. It was for a similar reason that John Bunyan at a later time was kept in Bedford gaol. Waldo and his friends were compelled to flee. Most of them found refuge in the Piedmontese Alps, and there among the mountaineers and sparse populations of the valleys they pursued their work of distributing and explaining the Scriptures. Many believed their preaching and turned to the Lord.

From the name of Waldo they were termed Waldenses, but from the Alpine valleys in which they lived they have been more commonly known as the Vaudois. In history they are generally associated with the Albigenses, the Protestants who received their name from the town of Albi in France, where they were very numerous. After a time his persecutors compelled Peter to leave the people he loved to find refuge in Bohemia, where in old age he passed peacefully to his reward.

The Waldenses relied on the Bible to enlighten the minds of men and produce changed lives. They were noted for their insistence on the free use of the Bible, the right of private judgment, and the right of laymen to preach the gospel. In these three points they broke decidedly from Rome. Great numbers of them became pedlars, and in their packs, hidden beneath silks and trinkets they carried copies of the Scriptures to cottage and castle alike. Whittier describes such a pedlar offering his wares to a lady, and then saying—

"O, lady fair, I have a gem, which a purer lustre flings
Than the diamond flash of a jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way";
The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow as a small meagre book,
Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from his folding robe he took.
"Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may it prove as much to thee,
Nay, keep thy gold, I ask it not, for the Word of God is free."

It cannot be affirmed that all the Waldenses were Baptists in that they practised the immersion of believers, but they rejected infant baptism, opposed priestcraft, demanded liberty of conscience, and generally held the faith of Baptists to-day. Though it is not possible to trace any direct connection, yet it may safely be said that the Paulicians, the Petrobrussians and the Waldenses closely resembled one another in their rejection of tradition and sacerdotalism, and in their full acceptance of the supremacy of the Word of God.

The later history of the Waldenses is written in blood. They perished by thousands, and it is of these martyred Christians that Milton wrote in his sonnet beginning—

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine Mountains cold
Even them who kept thy faith so pure of old.

But they could not be blotted out and successors of the early Vaudois are found worshipping in the valleys of the Piedmont to-day.

V.

BAPTISTS IN SWITZERLAND 400 YEARS AGO.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Reformation principles were spreading in Europe, the ancient city of Zurich was one of the most important in Northern Switzerland, and is now regularly visited by tourists from all parts of the world. Situated on the banks of the River Limmat, near its outflow from Lake Zurich, surrounded by orchards, vineyards, and beautiful gardens, beyond which rise in all their majesty, the ever snow-crowned Alps, the position is one of entrancing loveliness. The city to-day is noted for its silk manufacture, and at the same time is famed for its colleges and schools.

Four hundred years ago this old world city was stirred to its depths by reason of a Public Disputation in the City Hall, which had been ordered by the government of the Canton. For about three years the Baptists had been earnestly proclaiming their beliefs, and such interest had been aroused and so many persons had joined them, that the civic authorities decided that the time had come for an investigation of their faith and practice. The great Cathedral built two or three centuries before was the centre of the courageous ministry from 1519 to 1531, of Ulrich Zwingli who, like his great compeer, Martin Luther, dared to defy the Papal Church. Not far from the Cathedral was the

Rathhaus or City Hall, near the bridge that spans the river. Here on January 17th, 1825 a great Disputation took place on the subject of Baptism.

Zwingli, the leader of the Reformers, one of the greatest historic figures of that time, was not only a fearless preacher and faithful pastor, but also the foremost statesman in Switzerland. It was his desire to establish a Christian State in which the civil power would have jurisdiction over the Church. In this he was opposed by the Baptists. They protested against the union of Church and State, and urged that only believers in Christ could be members of His Church. With this the question of infant baptism was closely united. Zwingli, contrary to his earlier convictions, was in favour of this, and the Baptists, represented by Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, Ludwig Hatzer, and George Blaurock, opposed it. These were all learned and eloquent men, well versed in the Scriptures.

All day long in that old crowded city hall the discussion went on. In entering on his ministry in Zurich, Zwingli had declared that "nothing should be preached save what is contained in the Word of God," and the Baptists urged that he should abide by that principle, so that the Scriptures should be the only rule of faith and practice. At the close of the debate the City Council gave their verdict for their great leader, and issued an order that parents should have their children baptized at once on pain of banishment.

But the Baptists would not yield. They felt, with Luther, that it is not safe for a man to act against his conscience. Some were fined,

some were banished. Still, their teachings gained ground; so another Disputation was held on November 30th. Again the verdict was given against the Baptists, and another edict was issued declaring that all persons should abstain from believers' baptism, and that all infants were to be baptized. Severer penalties than before were attached to disobedience. The Baptist leaders were heavily fined or imprisoned. Still they could not be silenced, and on March 7th, 1526, the Zurich Council decreed that those who defied the law should be "drowned without mercy."

One of the first to suffer was Felix Mantz. As he was bound and about to be thrown into Lake Zurich he was heard to say, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." People turned homewards full of admiration for his constancy, and soon afterwards Capito, the Reformation preacher at Strassburg, wrote to Zwingli, saying, "It is reported here that your Felix Mantz has suffered punishment and died gloriously; on which account the cause of truth and piety, which you sustain, is greatly depressed."

Conrad Grebel died from the plague, George Blaurock was burned at the stake in 1529, and Ludwig Hatzer, after a term of imprisonment at Constance, was beheaded. Of him an eye-witness wrote: "As he finished his address to the bystanders he looked to heaven with beaming eyes. The people, touched and filled with compassion, wept." And another witness said, "A more glorious and manful death was never seen in Constance."

Thus, one by one, the leaders were silenced, and hundreds of men

and women similarly suffered, until the Baptist witness in Zurich was completely suppressed. A dark stain sullies the fame of Switzerland's great Reformer.

This story is re-told to-day, not to blacken the name of Zwingli, but to remind our young people of the heroism of men and women who held the faith we hold, and to strengthen their fidelity in these days when convictions are often too lightly held.

VI.

BALTHASAR HUBMAIER—MARTYRED MARCH 10th, 1528.

The story of the Reformation of the sixteenth century has been told again and again by writers of all communions, and the lives of Martin Luther, the monk that shook the world; of John Calvin, the great thinker of that age; of Ulrich Zwingli, and of a host of their compeers in Europe and Great Britain, have been frequently published; but the story of Hubmaier's life has been strangely forgotten, and yet it is a story calculated to fire the imagination, compel heart-searching, and put iron in our blood.

Hubmaier was born at Friedburg, in Bavaria, in 1480 or 1481. Very little is recorded of his family or of his early life, but it is known that his education began at Augsburg, about five miles from his birthplace, at a school famous for the training of boys. Thence in due course he went to the University of Friedburg, where he took his Master's degree in 1511.

In the following year he was appointed lecturer at the University of Ingolstadt, on the Danube, and was speedily made a Doctor in Theology. The University Church was called the Church of the Virgin.

It was a fine Gothic building, and of this church Hubmaier was made chaplain and preacher. His fame as an orator grew rapidly, and after three years he was appointed as preacher at the Cathedral of Regensburg, better known as Ratisbon. This cathedral was one of the largest and most beautiful in Europe. Here he continued as preacher from 1516 to 1520. Crowds thronged to hear him, and he was known and honoured as the most eloquent preacher of his day.

Up to this time he belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and only by the independence of his thought and speech gave any indication of the part he was to play in the great Reformation. In 1520 he removed to Waldshut, a beautiful little town on the Rhine, on the northern border of Switzerland, and here the great change in his life took place. For two years he remained a zealous Catholic, observing carefully all the ceremonies of the Church, but at the same time he gave all his spare hours to the study of the Scriptures, giving special attention to Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians. The result of such study by an earnest independent thinker was inevitable. He saw that the Church of Rome did not represent the faith and practice of the New Testament, and that salvation was not by the Sacraments of the Church but through faith in Christ alone. His experience was the same as that of Luther, who a few years earlier had revolted from the practices of Rome when he learned that we are justified by faith.

On a visit to Zurich he met Ulrich Zwingli, and conferred with him on the baptism of infants, of which he could find no trace in the New Testament. In the following year he took part in a public discussion at Zurich, held by order of the City Council, on the subjects

of the Worship of Images and the Observance of the Mass. Hubmaier was prepared to go much farther than Zwingli, and was more in accord with Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and George Blanrock, who desired to carry the principles of the Reformation to their logical issues.

Returning to Waldshut, he drew up a series of theses setting forth his beliefs, and changes were made in the worship of the Congregation. Pictures and images were banished from the Church, and the Lord's Supper was observed, the people being taught that the bread and the wine were memorials of Christ's death. The final break with Rome was made when Hubmaier repudiated the belief in the celebacy of the clergy, and anticipated the acts of Luther and Zwingli by marrying, to the great joy of the city, the daughter of a burgher named Elizabeth Hugline, who till the last shared his beliefs, and bravely helped him in all his work.

It was not to be expected that Hubmaier would be permitted to carry on his work of Reform without opposition, and soon the authorities of Austria sent Commissioners from Vienna to the Mayor and Council of Waldshut, complaining of their tolerance of a Doctor who preached things opposed to the Emperor and bishops, and demanded that he be banished from their town. The Council took firm ground, and replied that they knew that Hubmaier's intention was to preach nothing but the unadulterated Gospel, and they would not consent to his expulsion. From that time the Emperor Ferdinand was the implacable enemy of Hubmaier and of all who accepted his teachings, and the Austrian Government decided to force the town to give up their preacher. Hub-

maier was unwilling that the people he loved should be subjected to the horrors of war, and decided to leave the town for a time.

On September 1st, 1524, he was escorted by three armed knights to the frontier of the province, where other knights met him and brought him safely to Schaffhausen. Here for a time he found protection, for though the Austrian Government repeatedly demanded his surrender, the town council firmly refused to give him up.

After a little while Hubmaier returned to Waldshut, where he was welcomed with joyous demonstrations. On several occasions Austria menaced the town with an armed force, but men from Zurich came to her aid, and the invaders withdrew. At this juncture Austria had her attention partly withdrawn from Waldshut by the Peasants' Rising that was ultimately put down with fearful loss of life. It has been said that Hubmaier was the author of the twelve articles issued by the peasants, in which they claimed civil and religious liberty, but all that is certain is that he revised and commented on the manifesto. His position was pre-eminently that of preacher of the Gospel, and his interest in social reform was only secondary.

In April, 1525, William Roublin, for his advocacy of believer's baptism, was driven out of Zurich. He was kindly received at Waldshut and found Hubmaier ready for his teachings. His congregation was in full accord with him, so after Roublin had baptized Hubmaier and about sixty others, Hubmaier, on Easter Day, baptized over three hundred men, and on the Monday and Tuesday after Easter some seventy or eighty more. Zwingli then published a tract on "Baptism, Anabaptism, and Infant Baptism." To this Humaier quickly replied. Tract followed

tract, and the breach between these two great reformers grew rapidly deeper and wider. In this year, writing to Ecolampaidius, Hubmaier said, "I believe, yea, I know, that it will not go well with Christendom until Baptism and the Supper are brought back to their original purity."

With the defeat of the peasants, the Austrian Government was free to again take measures against Waldshut. Hubmaier felt that he must leave the town, so with a number of others he withdrew. The Austrian soldiers occupied the town and the reformation was crushed by violence. Hubmaier was ill, and had little money. His wife accompanied him, and they sought refuge in Zurich. Possibly Hubmaier relied on his early friendship with Zwingli, but all in vain.

He was sheltered for a few days by Henry Aberli, a Baptist preacher, for which act Aberli was afterwards heavily fined. But as soon as it was known that Hubmaier was in Zurich he was arrested by order of the Council. He had previously offered to publicly debate the question of baptism with Zwingli. The Council decided that this debate should now take place. This was in January, 1526.

The Council decided in favour of Zwingli, and moreover said that Hubmaier promised to recant his former opinions. It was speedily arranged that he should publicly avow his recantation. A day was fixed. The great Minster Church in Zurich was crowded. All the city wanted to hear Hubmaier's words. A sermon was preached by Zwingli, then Hubmaier arose and instead of making any recantation, boldly attacked infant baptism and defended the baptism of believers only. Instantly there was great commotion in the church. Hubmaier's friends rejoiced, his opponents were filled with madness. The uproar drowned the

speaker's voice. He was hurried from the church and thrown into prison.

There he was tortured by the rack, and in his pain and weakness promised to modify his teachings concerning baptism. It is a sad and pitiful story. Sad that a noble-hearted reformer should have been tortured by reformers. Pitiful that under the compulsion of the rack he should in weakness have compromised his convictions. Of this Hubmaier complains, saying, "Me, a sick man, just risen from a death-bed, hunted, exiled, and having lost everything I possessed, they required through the executioner, to teach another faith." Hubmaier's wife, with a number of others, were all imprisoned in the Tower, where the Council ordered they should be kept on bread and water till they recanted.

It required much grace and courage to remain a Baptist four hundred years ago.

Hubmaier bitterly regretted that in his suffering he had allowed a recantation to be wrung from him, but though it was obtained by such means, the Council of Zurich was satisfied and decreed that he should be released from prison, but must leave the country. Time was granted through the intercession of his friends, and in the middle of the year 1526 he quietly left Switzerland, and found refuge at Nicolsburg in Moravia. Here the influence of John Hus was deeply felt, and evangelical doctrines were more earnestly received than in any other part of the Empire.

Hubmaier was warmly welcomed by the leading preachers of Nicolsburg, and in conjunction with them resumed his labours with

redoubled energy. Now at last he enjoyed peace. Very soon his colleagues accepted his teachings and were baptized. Nicolsburg was in the domains of two brothers, Leonard and John, the barons of Lichenstein, to whom it owed its freedom of worship. These soon came under the influence of Hubmaier, and were publicly baptized. Other noblemen were favourable to the reformed doctrine. The golden age for Hubmaier and his friends seemed to have dawned.

The contrast to their past experiences were complete. Instead of being despised and persecuted they were welcomed and honoured. Hubmaier was indefatigable. A printer who had been driven from Zurich by persecution was his willing helper. Tracts written by Hubmaier were issued from the press in great numbers. In the course of twelve months seventeen pamphlets and treatises were printed. Copies of most of these have been preserved, and Hubmaier's teachings can be clearly seen. As a man of letters he ranks with Erasmus and Melancthon, while he excelled them as an eloquent preacher. Within a year no less than six thousand persons were baptized. Hubmaier was their acknowledged leader. A few months previously he was in the gloomy Tower of Zurich, fed on bread and water, agonised by suffering; now he was free, surrounded by enthusiastic followers, and his teachings were generally accepted.

Then a change came. The bright skies were quickly overcast. In October, 1520, Ferdinand, the Emperor of Austria, was elected to the Margravate of Moravia. The noblemen of the territory who for so many years had enjoyed semi-independence, resented their forced subjection to the Emperor. But they were too few to resist his power.

The writings of Hubmaier had been brought under the notice of the Austrian Government. Ferdinand was determined to put down all heresy, so in July, 1527, the Lords of Lichenstein were commanded to come to Vienna and bring Hubmaier with them as a heretic and rebel, long a fugitive from Austrian justice.

Sorely against their will these noblemen were compelled to obey, and soon Hubmaier and his wife were immured in the royal prison at Vienna. After a preliminary examination they were sent to another prison for several months. On March 3rd, 1528, he was brought back to Vienna, and the final process began. Again he suffered on the rack, but this time gave no sign of recantation. Consequently he was condemned to be burnt as a rebel against the Government, and a heretic against the Church. He was urged to confess to a priest and receive the last rites of the Church, but he steadfastly refused.

On March 10th he was led forth to die, his wife (of whom it is related that "she was hardened in the same heresy, more constant than her husband") exhorting him to fortitude.

An eye-witness, Dean of the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Vienna, gave the details of his end. "As he was led to the place of execution, he from time to time repeated, for his own consolation, verses of Scripture, and remained to the last 'fixed like an immovable rock in his heresy.' He was accompanied by an armed troop and a large crowd, and as he came to the pile of faggots he lifted up his voice and cried in the Swiss dialect: 'O gracious God, forgive my sins in my great torment. O Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou wilt

to-day take me out of this vale of tears. With joy I desire to die and come to Thee. O Lamb, O Lamb that takest away the sins of the world! O God, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.'

"When the wood was kindled and he saw the fire he said with a loud voice, 'O my Heavenly Father, O my gracious God,' and then, overwhelmed with smoke, he breathed out his soul."

Thus, four hundred years ago, one of the noblest of the reformers, in a chariot of fire, passed to his reward. Three days later his devoted wife, with a great stone tied to her neck, constant to the very last in testifying to her faith, was thrown into the waters of the Danube.

VII.

MENNO SIMON AND THE BAPTISTS OF HOLLAND.

In a history of the Church prepared for the Government of Holland, two eminent Dutch authors, Drs. Ypieg and Dermout, say: "The Baptists who in former times were called Anabaptists, and at a later period Mennonites, were originally Waldenses . . . On this account the Baptists may be considered the only religious community which has continued from the time of the Apostles; as a Christian society which has kept pure, through all ages, the evangelical doctrines of religion."

The Baptists of Holland were called Mennonites because they owed their faith largely to the teaching of Menno Simon, one of the most noteworthy men of the Reformation period. He was born in 1505 at Witmarsum, in Friesland, the country that stretches along the North Sea east of the Netherlands. Very little is known of his early life, but his numerous writings prove that he was well educated.

In the years that followed his school days, he was trained for a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, but except for such parts as occur in the Church ritual, he was in entire ignorance of the Bible. In

1528 he was appointed vicar of a small village, and there began to read the New Testament. Soon his mind was filled with doubts about the beliefs and customs he had been taught. At this time he heard that the Baptists were subjected to fierce persecution in the Netherlands, and the story of the death of Sicke Freerks, a poor tailor, compelled serious thought.

Freerks had been imprisoned because he had confessed his faith in baptism, and because he would not renounce his faith, though cruelly tortured, was sentenced in the following terms: "Sicke Freerks, on this 20th March, 1531, is condemned by the court to be executed with the sword; his body shall be laid on the wheel, and his head set upon a stake because he has been re-baptized, and perseveres in that baptism."

When Menno heard of this he was deeply moved. It seemed strange to him that anyone should suffer for his beliefs about baptism, and he eagerly searched the New Testament for any records of infant baptism. Not finding any, he enquired of three of the Reformation leaders—Luther, Bucer, and Bullinger—and was dissatisfied with their answers. His doubts increased regarding the teachings of the Church of which he was a priest, and finally, in 1535, he renounced his position and joined a small Baptist church.

For a year he quietly helped the church in its work, and then was asked to become its pastor. The outlook was dark, but the spirit in which he began his work can be seen from his own words: "He who bought me with the blood of His love and called me to His service,

unworthy as I am, searches me and knows that I seek neither gold nor goods, nor luxury nor ease on earth; but only my Lord's glory, my salvation and the souls of many immortals."

From that time began the organisation and progress of the Baptist churches of Holland. For 25 years, amid almost incredible difficulties and hardships, Menno Simon was the Apostle of Northern Europe. The historian writes, "He travelled in West Friesland the territory of Groningen and East Friesland, then in Guelderland, Holland, Brabant and Westphalia and the German provinces along the shores of the Baltic, and penetrated as far as Livonia, and gathered an immense number of followers, so that he was almost the common father and bishop of all the Anabaptists." That is, in the days when the facilities for travel were few, in all the region along the shores of the North and Baltic seas, from Belgium to Russia, this dauntless man carried on his great mission.

The Government of the Netherlands proscribed him and offered pardon and a large reward in money to any of his fellow Baptists who would betray him. But they loyally helped him. On one occasion one of the brethren, Reynerts by name, had sheltered him and aided him to escape from his foes. For this Reynerts was arrested, and because, under torture, he refused to betray his loved teacher, was put to death. Exiled from home, in constant anxiety about his wife and children, forced to frequently escape from one country to another, in perils oft, the heroic missionary unfalteringly bore his witness to New Testament truth.

At last the Lord of Fresenburg, in Holstein, who greatly admired the conduct of the followers of Menno, offered him protection on his estate. There Menno and his friends settled in large numbers, and in peace and quietness Menno wrote and published many of his works, from which we can gather that his beliefs closely correspond with those of the Baptists of to-day. At evening time it was light. Peacefully, after all his hair-breadth escapes from death, he passed to his reward on January 15th, 1561, in his own home, and was laid to rest by his loved ones in his own garden.

For many a generation the Dutch churches bore his name, and Mennonite churches exist to-day in Southern Russia and America.

VIII.

THE FIRST ENGLISH BAPTIST CHURCH.

Of all the heroic stories of the world there are few grander than the story of the sufferings of the people of Holland in the sixteenth century under the Duke of Alva, the representative of the King of Spain. The whole story is most graphically told in Motley's "History of the Dutch Republic." To escape from persecution, a number of Baptists crossed to England, but there unhappily they found no more liberty than in their own country. Even under Queen Elizabeth they were denied the right of freedom of faith and worship. It is a sad story. The fires of Smithfield, put out on the Queen's accession, were lighted again for the burning of two Baptist martyrs, Hendrick Terwoots and Jan Pieters. They were not English subjects, but, persecuted in their own land for their faith, they fled for protection to an English Queen, but all in vain. Others died in prison, and many were sent back to the Netherlands..

These persecutions strengthened the belief that was fast gaining ground that the Church ought not to be subject to the domination of the State, and a party was formed in England, afterwards termed Separatists, who claimed independency and freedom of conscience. These

just claims, neither Elizabeth and her advisers, nor James I., would grant, and scores of men and women perished in loathsome gaols or fled to the Continent.

Among those who escaped to Holland was John Smyth, with his friends, Robinson, Brewster and Bradford. Smyth was a graduate of Cambridge. Very few particulars about his early life have been preserved, but it is known that he matriculated in Cambridge in 1571, and his writings prove that he received a good education. On completion of his college course, he was appointed vicar of the church at Gainsborough, on the Trent, in Lincolnshire. At first he opposed the Separatists or Independents, but after a time he resigned his position, giving up all his social and ecclesiastical advantages in the Church of England, and joined them. He had come to see that the Church of Jesus Christ should consist of believers only, and should be free from State control

In a "Confession of Faith," issued some years later, he says: "The Church is a company of faithful people, separated from the world by the Word and Spirit of God, being knit unto the Lord and one unto another, by baptism, upon their own confession of faith and sins." He speedily became a recognised leader of the Separatists, and was highly esteemed.

For fifteen years he laboured strenuously, suffering much hardship because of the tyranny of Queen Elizabeth and her bishops, and finally left England in 1606, that in another land he might find freedom to worship God. Under James I. matters did not improve. On one occa-

sion, when a deputation of Separatist ministers waited on him, he replied: "If this be all your party have to say, I will make them conform or I will hurry them out of the land, or else worse." It seems strange to us to-day, to read that many of England's noblest sons had to leave their friends and homes and native land for conscience sake. The liberties we enjoy were slowly and hardly won.

John Smyth settled in Holland, and in Amsterdam became pastor of a company of exiles from Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottingham. Discussion arose among the members of the church, partly because of their contact with the Mennonite churches, on the subject of baptism. It was not long before Smyth was convinced that baptism was not for infants, but only for believers, as a sign of their faith. With him, action quickly followed belief, and the church of which he was pastor, was dissolved.

Then the question arose, who would administer the rite of baptism to these English exiles. Consistently enough they believed that there was no virtue in the administrator, so Smyth baptized himself, and then baptized his colleague, Thomas Helwys, and thirty-six others. Thus the first English Baptist Church was constituted in Amsterdam in 1609. Smyth has been blamed for baptizing himself, but he argued that it made no difference whether he baptized himself or had himself baptized by another unbaptized man. It was to him an act of absolute personal consecration to Christ.

The church met in a large bakery called "The Cake House of John Munter," and, soon after it was constituted, published a Confession of

Faith in twenty-six articles, with most of which our Baptist churches to-day are in full agreement. One article, that had special reference to the times when it was drawn up, reads: "The magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine; but to leave the Christian religion free to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressors . . . . for Christ only is the King and Lawgiver of the Church and conscience." These closing words simply and strongly affirm the fundamental principle of our Baptist Faith. Christ and Christ alone is King.

John Smyth died in 1612. One writer describes him as a very lovable man, and another says of him: "Seized by the time-spirit, he was restless, fervid, earnest and thorough-going . . . a man of incorruptible simplicity, beautiful humility, glowing charity, a fair scholar and a good preacher." The story of the church he founded will be told in our next sketch.

IX.

THE LONG FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

Though the Baptists in Holland had been formed into a church in Amsterdam, and enjoyed freedom of worship, they were not content. They were strangers in a strange land, and looked longingly towards England. They desired to return to the home of their fathers, but there was as yet no sign that they would enjoy any greater freedom than when they had left their home. Still they thought of their brethren who had remained in England, who seemed as sheep without a shepherd, and they also thought that it seemed like cowardice to evade hardship and persecution by staying in Holland. So about the time of John Smyth's death, Thomas Helwys and most of the members of the church returned to England. Very quietly they came back, for they knew they were running a great risk. Helwys had relatives in London, and it seemed to him that there he must begin his mission. With a few loyal souls he met for worship in the most private manner at Spitalfields, outside the walls of the city. Freedom was yet a great way off.

On the 11th of April, 1611, Edward Wightman was burned at the stake in Lichfield, and in charges laid against him it was said that he maintained "that the baptism of infants is an abominable custom" and

"that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the Church of England." On the 18th of March, 1612, Bartholomew Legate was burned at Smithfield. When we recall the fact that in 1611 the revision of the translation of the Bible after four years' labour by the most eminent scholars of the nation, was completed, and was authorised by King James, it seems almost impossible that such intolerance in matters of faith should continue.

Thomas Helwys determined to appeal directly to the King. In the inscription of a little book he had prepared, he wrote: "The King is a mortal man and not God, therefore hath no power over the immortal souls of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual lords over them." Some may say he was incautious, but the boldness of his words is in splendid contrast to the fulsome eulogy of the address of the translators to King James that appeared in the title page of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611.

The only answer the King made to Helwys was to order that he be imprisoned. He was lodged in Newgate prison, and nothing more is recorded of him. The prisons of that age were cruel and loathsome to the last degree. In Newgate, Helwys probably died a lingering death, for we read that in 1616 his uncle bequeathed a small sum to Joan, his widow.

Meanwhile, the pastorate of the little group of Baptists was undertaken by John Murton who, in his turn, was immured in Newgate. From his prison, Murton corresponded with the pastor of the Separatist Church in Colchester, who was imprisoned there. These

men could only be silenced by death. So in spite of all oppression, the truth spread, and by 1626 there were eleven Baptist churches in England and by 1644 the number had increased to 47.

One of the writers of that period was Leonard Busher, who describes himself as a citizen of London, and who in the days of Queen Elizabeth, had found refuge in Holland. On returning to London, he said he found it hard to get his daily bread with his weak body and feeble hands. Yet this weak and gentle soul was one of the bravest advocates of religious liberty. That he was a Baptist is evident from his words, "Such as willingly and gladly receive the gospel, He hath commanded to be baptized in water; that is, dipped for dead in the water."

He wrote a treatise in 1611, entitled "Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience."This was presented to the King and Parliament. In it Busher assigns seventeen reasons against persecution. His object was to secure a repeal of the oppressive laws against Nonconformists. He gives many examples of toleration, and pleads eloquently for freedom. The character of his appeal may be judged from the following sentence, "May it please your Majesty and Parliament to understand that, by fire and sword, to constrain princes and people to receive that one true religion of the gospel, is wholly against the mind and merciful law of Christ, dangerous both to King and State, a means to decrease the Kingdom of Christ, and a means to increase the kingdom of Antichrist."

Other books and pamphlets were published, and in 1620 an appeal was made by the Baptists to King and Parliament, entitled "A Most

Humble Supplication." The full title reads, "A most Humble Supplication of many of the King's Royal subjects, ready to testify all civil obedience, by the Oath of Allegiance or otherwise, and that of conscience, who are persecuted (only for differing in religion) contrary to Divine and Human Testimonies." This was drawn up by one who describes himself as "a close prisoner in Newgate."

The manner in which it was written is told by Roger Williams as follows: "Having not the use of pen and ink, he wrote these arguments in milk in sheets of paper brought to him by the woman, his keeper, from a friend in London as the stopples of his milk bottle. In such paper, written with milk, nothing appeared; but the way of reading it by fire being known to his friend who received the papers, he transcribed and kept together the papers, although the author himself could not correct nor view what himself had written."

Slowly, very slowly, toleration and then full freedom of worship were won. And of that long struggle and final victory Professor Masson wrote: "Not to the Church of England, nor to Scottish Presbyterianism, nor to English Puritanism at large does the honour of the first perception of the full principle of liberty of conscience and its first assertion in English speech belong. That honour has to be assigned, I believe, to the Independents generally, and to the Baptists in particular."

These historic facts are recalled that our young people may be led to value more highly and to guard more earnestly the freedom bought for us at so great a price.

X.

AN OLD CHURCH MINUTE BOOK.

The annual meetings of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland were held last May in the historic city of Bristol in the West of England. The delegates numbered 2500, and among the principal speakers were two Australian preachers, the Revs. H. G. Hackworthy, M.A., and Dr. F. W. Boreham. The business meetings were held in the Broadmead Church, the largest Baptist Church in the city, seating 1500 people. This famous church building has been altered and enlarged several times, and stands on the site secured for the church nearly 300 years ago, and the Union delegates would be reminded of the great contrast between the freedom the church enjoys to-day and the oppression of its early days.

In our last sketch it was mentioned that in 1644 there were 47 churches in England. One of these was the Broadmead Church at Bristol, founded in the troublous days of 1640. The records of the church were published by the Hansard Knollys Society, and a copy printed in 1847 is now on the table before me. It is a volume of 500 pages, and is of thrilling interest. The sufferings and progress of the church from 1640 to 1867, are fully told by its own early members. The

pages reveal fervent spirituality, wonderful patience, quiet heroism, missionary zeal, and fine generosity that sternly challenge us in our days of freedom and material advancement.

A few extracts from that old minute book will serve to bring the faith and patience of those early English Baptists clearly before our minds: "Upon the 29th day of the 3rd month Anno 1660, when King Charles II. was brought from his exile again into the nation and to the Crown, then Satan stirred up adversaries against us, and our troubles or persecution began."

"Upon the 15th of the 11th month 1660, the Mayor, Sir Henry Creswick, sent his eldest serjeant with the King's proclamation to our pastor, Mr. Ewins, and forbad him to preach in his own house." (There was a law against any preaching in private houses.)

"Upon the 25th day of June Anno 1661, Mr. Ewins was called before the Mayor for preaching at the Friars, and charged not to preach." (As he continued preaching he was arrested and imprisoned for a month. In 1662 he was again imprisoned, and the next extract tells of what happened in 1663.)

"The next day he (Edward Terrill) was fetched from his house and brought before the Mayor, with Mr. Ewins, Mr. Patient, and brother Simpson; and because they would not give bond for their good behaviour they were all imprisoned in the jailor's house, over against Newgate, and there they lay until the Sessions, about a quarter of a year after. Only brother Terrill they released him, after they had kept

him in prison a fortnight, taking sureties for his appearance at the said next Sessions. And they were all indicted of a riot and then tried and, as the Mayor, Sir John Knight, ordered it, were found guilty of a riot at common law, and so fined; Mr. Ewins was fined £50, and brother Simpson fined £50, but brother Terrill they fined but £5, which they would not pay, and so were sentenced to lie in prison until they paid it."

"So that upon the 26th day of September, 1664, Mr. Ewins and brother Simpson were released out of prison. Which long and tedious imprisonment so decayed our pastor, and his straining his voice in prison to preach, which he would every Lord's Day, that the people gathered together under the prison walls might hear, he being about four pairs of stairs high from them, that when he came out of prison, after the first sermon he preached abroad, he fainted away, and declined continually so that it hastened his days."

There is no need to comment on these extracts. They forcibly tell their own tale. In 1664 "The Conventicle Act" was passed, which made it unlawful for more than five persons to be present at any meeting. Under this law the church was troubled and harassed for years. We pass over many records and come to the years 1682 and 1683 when the church members met in private houses, in the fields or in the woods, wherever they could escape the vigilance of their foes. The following extracts from the minute book tell of splendid fidelity.

"On the Lord's Day, the 29th January (1682) the church that were at liberty appointed four places to meet in . . . many of the congrega-

tion went in the afternoon on Durdham Down, and got into a cave of the rock, towards Clifton, when brother Thomas Whinnell preached to them. . . . The constables hunted the fields for them, but found them not."

March 19th: "Being the Lord's day, met in the lanes beyond Baptist mills."

April 13th: "They met in a lane, in the rain."

"On the 2nd July, Lord's Day, our pastor preached in another place in the wood. Our friends took much pains in the rain, because many informers were ordered out to search; and we were in peace, though there were near twenty men and boys in search."

"On the 21st January, 1683 we met at 8 in the morning, and though there were seven on horseback and twenty on foot to seek us, we escaped, having broken up at ten."

On the 22nd April, being Lord's Day, we went out at four in the morning and were at peace."

"On November 14th, a day of prayer, having some hours together in the wood between London and Sodbury Road: the enemy came upon us unawares and seized about eight persons; but the brethren escaped to admiration. The bushes were of great service to us."

"On December 20th, Watkins, the marshal, and others went with warrants from Justice Herbert to brother Joe Morgan in Temple Street and took his yarn and what goods they could find, for seven pounds ten shillings. And the day before they took away Margaret Seymour's

trunk and clothes, worth about thirty pounds, for seven pounds odd money, for being at our meeting in the fields."

"On the 30th, being a hard frost and snow on the ground, we met in the wood, and though we stood in the snow, the sun shone upon us, and we were in peace."

"On October 7th (1684), brother Fownes, being brought into court was by Powell the chairman called a ringleader, turbulent, seditious; and told he must find £600 bail to appear next sessions at Bristol and be of good behaviour or be in prison."

"On the 29th of November, 1685, our pastor, brother Fownes, died in Gloucester jail, having been kept there for two years and nine months, a prisoner, unjustly and maliciously, for the testimony of Jesus and preaching the Gospel. He was a man of great learning, of a sound judgment, an able preacher."

These are only a few extracts from scores of a similar character, that tell of noble endurance for the sake of loyalty to conscience and to Jesus Christ.

XI.

MORE EXTRACTS FROM AN OLD CHURCH MINUTE BOOK.

In a record of proceedings of February, 1667, an account is given of the baptism of ten men and four women in the river at Bristol, and the writer says, "Most of these persons now baptized had neglected or omitted their duty, after they were convinced of it, all the winter, for fear of the cold; and then about the beginning of February it happened to be fine warm weather; about which time they pitched upon this day to pass under the ordinance. And by reason our pastor, by a fall that he received after he came forth of prison, had a pain that did use to take him in the nature of a sciatica, it was doubted for him to stand so long in the water might increase his said distemper; therefore the brethren of the church sent for Mr. Thomas, of Wales, pastor of a church at Llantrisaint to be the administrator.

"And the Lord in His wise providence so ordered it that when he came according to the day appointed, it was such extreme cold weather, the like that had not been all that winter before, for exceeding high and sharp piercing wind, frost, and snow; it was very violent, though the snow was not very deep. But the wind and the frost so much, that

one of the women to be baptized, in going to the place through the meadows, her handkerchief received some wet, being about her neck was frozen; and a distemper upon her in such abundance, that her maid that waited upon her being only privy to it, told her, if she went into the water she would not come forth alive. Also another, Mr. Jennings, the minister, was pained with the toothache so great, that his face was very much swelled, bound up, and by reason whereof had not been out of his house near a week before, and that day very ill with it. Another of the men, about a week before, sprained his leg; not able to go, was carried upon a horse to the place. Another man of them that was very weakly, thin and consumptive, the relations of whom were very averse to the ordinance.

"Wherefore some did fear the issue, seeing the terrible sharpness of the season; but the persons themselves that were to pass under the ordinance, acted faith in the Lord; and because the administrator was come so far on purpose, according to appointment, they would not defer it any longer.

"And the Lord, to declare His power, did as it were work a miracle, to give a precedent to others that should fear the coldness of the season to do His will. The Lord preserved them all; not so much as one was ill, but rather better by it; and are all alive to this day, being about ten years since, to speak of the Lord's then goodness. Though some would fain have been then spectators, but they were afraid to go by reason it was such extreme piercing weather, and continued so for three days together; that those adversaries that heard of it after it was done, looked

upon the people as mad, that they would adventure on such a work at such a season. Therefore from all, praise, praise, praise and glory be to the Lord."

It is very plain from this account of a baptism in severe wintry weather that those baptized had strong convictions as to their duty. Their faith and courage are an example for us to-day. A baptism in a cold flowing river with snow-covered banks presents a great contrast to a baptistery with warmed water surrounded with feathery palms and flowers. And to join a church then meant to join a proscribed people with no freedom of worship. Yet amid all discouragements and difficulties the number of church members steadily increased, and at the close of the troublous times the church was stronger than it was at the beginning. The storms purified and strengthened the church. Our days of ease and peace tend to indifference of faith and practice. One illustration of the determination of the early Baptists is seen in the fact that the roll of membership was called whenever the Communion of the Lord's Supper was observed, and if any stayed away through fear, their names were removed from the roll. The discipline of the church was a real thing then.

One other extract from these old records may be made to show the spirit that animated the church. The salary of the pastor was £80 per year. At first sight the amount seems small, but remembering the different value of money it compares very favourably with what is paid to-day. But it was the pastor who received £80 per year who was fined £50 for preaching contrary to the law. This shows the severity of the sentence. The record reads:—

"Of those that subscribed to the pastor's maintenance there is to be observed the grace of God in some. One aged brother, named Henry Pierce, a very mean, poor man to appearance, in person and habit and by profession or trade but a journeyman shoemaker, that lived up in a cock-lift; yet his heart was so enlarged for and by the Lord that he would subscribe and did pay not less than twenty shillings per annum. And one other member, a sister named Margaret Webb, that had two children to maintain, that lived very mean and took great care to carry the world about, to live therein honestly to all, and laboured very hard so to do; yet she would subscribe towards the carrying on of the gospel and did pay forty shillings per year. Which examples did provoke, if not shame many others."

So the whole record tells of a united earnest people whose one aim was to be guided in all matters by the Bible and to be loyal in word and deed to Christ their King. The story of the brave days of old fills us with confidence and pride to-day.

XII.

VAVASOUR POWELL, THE EVANGELIST OF WALES.

In the museum of the Baptist College at Bristol, England, is a book of very great interest to all lovers of John Bunyan. It is the well-thumbed Bible Concordance that in all probability was used by t'.e great allegorist when writing his wonderful dream. The inscript on on the fly-leaf says that the book was printed in 1673, or five years before the "Pilgrim's Progress" was first issued, and at the bottom of the fly-leaf are the words clearly written, "John Bunyan, his book." In this Tercentenary year many will look on Bunyan's autograph and realise something of his life as they see the very Concordance he used in Bedford Gaol. The author of the Concordance was a Baptist preacher, one of Bunyan's contemporaries, whose name at that time was known and loved amid all the mountains and vales of Wales.

Both John Bunyan and Vavasor Powell spent many years in prison for conscience' sake, and the bodies of both were buried in Bunhill Fields, London. The inscription on the tomb of the latter read:— "Vavasor Powell lyes here enterred who was a successful teacher of the past; a sincere witness in the present; a choyce example to future ages. For which he being called to several prisons, was their tryed

and found faithful, would not accept deliverance, expecting a better resurrection, in hope of which he finished his life and testimony together, in the 11th year of his imprisonment and in the 53rd of his age. Octob. 27, 1670."

An inscription like this wakes a desire to know more about the man. He was born at Knuclas in Wales in 1617, eighteen years later than Oliver Cromwell, nine later than John Milton, and eleven years earlier than John Bunyan. What memories of stirring times and brave deeds are awakened by these names. Three years after Powell's birth, the Pilgrim Fathers sailed for America that they might find what England denied them, freedom to worship God.

The Welsh lad received his early education from his uncle, and then went to Jesus College, at Oxford. While a student he was very fond of sport, and seems to have been a ringleader in mischief. Presently he became concerned about his spiritual condition, and after four years of doubt and questionings found joy and peace. This is how he describes the great change in his life:

"While I was in this agony the God of all grace did about noon present me that Scripture John 3: 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," which words were then revealed to me and opened thus: First, that there was nothing necessary to salvation but only believing in Christ. Secondly, that to such as did believe in Christ there was certainty of salvation."

As soon as he believed on Christ he began to tell others of the Saviour he had found. At that time there were very few preachers of

the gospel in Wales, and even these were hindered by the laws of the land. Persecuted and at times imprisoned in Wales because of his evangelistic work, Powell and some of his friends went to London, and there he preached to large congregations.

In 1646 he felt the call of his native country, and returned to Wales to begin a wonderful work as the evangelist of the nation. His labours were incessant. His biographer writes: "He preached three and often four times a day for at least five days a week throughout the year. There was hardly a church, chapel or town hall in all Wales where he did not at some time or other preach. He also constantly visited fairs and markets. Even obscure hamlets and villages amid the valleys and on the mountain slopes of Wales were the scenes of his earnest and untiring ministry during the ensuing fourteen years."

These were the days of the unhappy civil war in England, and in 1651 Powell was appointed one of the chaplains of Cromwell's Ironsides. Two years later he was in London and witnessed the installation of Cromwell as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. This seemed to Powell contrary to the principles of the Commonwealth, and he preached publicly against Cromwell's assumption of supreme power. For this he was imprisoned. His imprisonment did not last long, and soon he was back again at his loved work among the hills and dales of Wales.

In 1655 he was led to study the subject of baptism, and was baptized in an out-of-doors baptistery built among the trees of Rhual Park. This was the beginning of the wide and rapid advance of the Baptist churches of Wales. Powell was so well known and trusted that thou-

sands began to study the subject and were baptized. For five years he continued his ardent self-denying labours, and Baptist churches were established in very many towns, but when Charles II. ascended the throne in 1660, the right to preach the gospel was again denied.

In April of that year, Powell was imprisoned "as a most factious and dangerous minister." He was taken to London and kept in the Fleet for two years. During that time he wrote his experiences in a little book which was published under the title of "The Bird in the Cage Chirping." In the noisome Fleet prison his health failed and he was removed to Southsea Castle, and there kept in close confinement for five years.

On the fall of Clarendon in 1667 he received his liberty and again preached to multitudes of people, but in less than ten months was imprisoned at Cardiff. Thence he was taken to London. This time his treatment was less harsh, and he was permitted to preach to his friends in prison. But the end was near. He was worn out by suffering, and on the 27th October, 1670, died in the new Fleet prison in Lambeth. The faithful evangelist was only silenced by death.

XIII.

ROGER WILLIAMS, THE CHAMPION OF LIBERTY.

In the year 1600 Roger Williams was born in Wales. Early in life he was taken to London and, under the direction of the famous lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, was educated at "the Charter House School," and afterwards at the Cambridge University where, in 1627, he took his degree. For a time he studied law and was thus prepared for the great work he was later to accomplish. Though studying law, his mind was turned to the Christian ministry, and after a little while he was ordained to the care of a parish in Lincolnshire.

It was in December of the year 1620 that one of the great history-making events of the modern world took place; it was at that date that the Pilgrim Fathers from the "Mayflower" landed at Plymouth Rock on the coast of America. Soon afterwards many in England felt impelled to follow them, that they might escape from civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. Roger Williams was one of these. He left Bristol, England, on December 1st, 1630, and reached Boston in America on February 5th, 1631. There he was appointed assistant to Mr. Skelton, minister of the church at Salem, and three years afterwards became his successor.

His Puritan convictions led him to protest against the state of things he found in the New England colony. The customs in Massachusetts were that no one could fill any civil office unless he was a church member, and that all religious questions were determined by the magistrates of the town. This alliance of Church and State was contrary to the convictions of Roger Williams, and in his preaching he affirmed that the magistrates had no right to punish offences against the first four of the Ten Commandments, their power being limited to breaches of the second Table of the Law. For this he was tried by the General Court of Salem on the charge of holding and proclaiming "new and dangerous opinions against the authority of the magistrates." The Court declared that the charge was proved, and sentenced the preacher to banishment from the colony of Massachusetts. Six weeks were allowed him before his departure.

How pitiable it all seems to us now, that the very men who went to the New World to escape from persecution, should themselves become persecutors. Only very slowly did men learn the meaning and value of toleration. The historian Bradford holds the magistrates "inexcusable in the treatment of Roger Williams . . . . merely for his honest independence of opinion."

It was in the beginning of the winter of 1635 that Williams was banished. The settlers from Europe were few, and outside the settlements the Indian tribes held sway. The winter was unusually severe. The land was frost-bound. Wolves and bears roamed in the gloomy forests. In these wild wastes in the bitterly cold weather Williams was

turned adrift. For fourteen weeks, he says, he wandered, "without bread or bed."

Happily he had previously by kindness won the friendship of some of the redskin warriors. But for their hospitality he must have perished. An Indian chief, named Massasoit, took him to his cabin and treated him as a brother.

In the springtime Williams bought a tract of land from the Indians on the east bank of the Seekonk River, and prepared to build a home. But this spot was within the jurisdiction of the Plymouth settlement, and the authorities sent word that Williams must go further away. So in a canoe on the river he paddled down-stream till he came to an inviting spot on the edge of the primeval forest. There, near an abundant spring of water he decided to make his home. There he pitched his tent, and in grateful remembrance of God who had graciously guided and protected him, he named the place "Providence." He bought land from the Indians, was soon joined by a number of his former congregation and together they laid the foundations of an absolutely free city and state. Providence, Rhode Island, is known throughout the world.

Six months after his banishment, Williams learned that the Indian tribes were forming a league to destroy all the English. He at once informed the governor of Massachusetts and was by him asked to act as mediator between the colonists and the Indians. For three days and nights Williams lived amongst the Indians who were threatening vengeance on all who had despoiled their ancient hunting grounds and

as a result of his intercession, in the end, peaceful counsels prevailed and a treaty was concluded between the Indian chiefs and the English. Thus did Roger Williams heap coals of fire on the heads of those who had driven him from home.

Three years after Williams settled at Providence the little colony consisted of thirty families. Up to this time, though holding Baptist principles, Williams had not been baptized, but now his convictions regarding the Lordship of Christ and the supremacy of Scripture, led him logically to renounce infant baptism, and to determine to be baptized. Others agreed with him, and the question arose as to who would baptize them. Finally the question was settled in this way—one of his former members at Salem, Ezekiel Holliman, baptized Williams, and he in turn baptized Holliman and ten others. This was the beginning of the Baptist churches in America.

But Williams is remembered not so much because of his practice of baptism as for his assertion of liberty of conscience. Bancroft, the American historian, wrote: "He was the first person in modern Christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience and equality of opinions before the law . . . Williams would permit persecution of no opinion, no religion, leaving heresy unharmed by the law and orthodoxy unprotected by the terrors of penal statutes."

Roger Williams died in 1863, in his 84th year, and was buried with all the honours the colony could show. The principles of liberty on which he insisted have been embodied in the Constitutions of each and

all of the States of the great Republic. Williams was a wise Empire-builder, and America has nobly honoured his memory.

In 1872 the Congress of the United States had placed a memorial of Roger Williams in the National Capitol, and on that occasion Senator Anthony said: "In all our history no name shines with a purer light than his whose memorial we have lately placed in the Capitol. In the history of all the world there is no more striking example of a man grasping a grand idea, at once, in its full proportions, in all its completeness and carrying it out, unflinchingly to its remotest legitimate results. Roger Williams did not merely lay the foundations of religious freedom, he constructed the whole edifice, in all its impregnable strength and in all its imperishable beauty." The orator said much more in a similar strain, and all readers of history endorse his words.

XIV.

WILLIAM CAREY, THE FATHER OF MODERN MISSIONS.

In our previous sketches we have seen that during the seventeenth century the preachers of the Gospel were under grave disabilities, and that privations and hardships provoked splendid heroism and unflinching fidelity to Christ. Except by the Moravian brethren, missionary enterprises to foreign lands were neglected. The beginning of the eighteenth century was a period of religious decline and deadness. Possibly at no time was religion at such a low ebb in England. The reaction from Puritanism was extreme. Then, before the close of the century, came the great Evangelical Revival through the preaching of Whitfield and the Wesleys, and also the awakening of missionary zeal. It was a glorious springtide of faith and love. The rigid Calvinism that had paralysed the Church was superseded by a yearning desire for the salvation of men.

The temper of the old time was expressed by Dr. J. Ryland, who said, when Carey proposed that missions for the heathen should be undertaken: "Sit down, young man; when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine." The great truth of the Divine Sovereignty had been pushed to wrong conclusions. The new

temper was shown by such men as Dan Taylor, through whose labours was formed, in 1770, "the New Connexion of General Baptists"; John Sutcliffe, minister of Olney, who urged concerted and regular prayer for "the spread of the gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe"; Andrew Fuller, minister of Kettering, who published a work in 1784 entitled "The Gospel, Worthy of All Acceptation"; and William Carey, who while he sat on his shoemaker's seat kept looking at a map of the world he had drawn, with many countries shaded black, concerning which he said sorrowfully to his visitors, "They are all pagan."

When Carey became pastor of the church at Moulton, he spoke at every meeting of Baptist ministers, of the claims of the heathen world. In 1792 he published his "Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens." It was a marvellous compendium of accurate information, wide generalisation and impassioned appeal. At length he was given his opportunity, and preached at the annual association meetings at Nottingham, on May 30th, 1792, on Isaiah 54: 2-3, the sermon having the oft-quoted divisions, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." It was a great crisis in the history, not only of the Baptist Association, but of the whole Church of God.

Carey's was a clarion call from the Lord of Hosts. For a time the leaders hesitated. Finally they resolved on decisive action, and at Kettering, in the back parlour of the house belonging to the widow of Beeby Wallis, who had been an active deacon of Andrew Fuller's Church, twelve men met on October 2nd, 1792, and after prayer and

earnest discussion, decided to form a society, to be called "The Particular (Calvinist) Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen."

They were all poor men, but then and there gave proof of their deep sincerity by giving the sum of £13/2/6 for the commencement of the work. Some ridiculed the idea of twelve obscure Northamptonshire ministers attempting the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, but these men had faith and vision, and such faith moves mountains.

That historic house at Kettering has been retained by the Baptists of Great Britain as a Mission House, and the example of the twelve men who so self-denyingly responded to the call of God that day, has fired all generations since. It seemed a small beginning, but it was a glorious beginning; the beginning of the great missionary enterprises of the modern world. It was a fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision of a river of life flowing from the temple of God to fertilise and beautify the waste and desolate places of the earth. We cannot but be grateful that to Baptists was given the privilege of becoming pioneers of modern missions.

William Carey was chosen as the first missionary of the society, and India was chosen as the first field of service, and on June 13, 1793, Carey and Mr. Thomas, a surgeon who had lived for a time in Bengal, embarked on a Danish ship, the Kron Princess Maria, and five months later landed at Calcutta. Carey had adopted the Moravian plan of self-support and community of goods, and told the society that once he was landed in India and fixed at a station he would require no more money from them. But he had not realised the difficulties of self-support in such a country as India, and for six years he endured great privations.

In January, 1800, Carey was joined by Joshua Marshman and William Ward, and at Serampore, a Danish settlement on the Hoogli, about fifteen miles from Calcutta, the mission was established that will never be forgotten. Carey, Marshman and Ward formed a wonderful brotherhood, that was only ended by death. Carey laboured for forty-one years in Bengal without a break, and died on June 9th, 1834. The tombs of the immortal three of Serampore are all in the land they loved and for which they gave their lives, and the story of all they accomplished is one of the grandest in the whole history of the Christian Church.

Carey has been termed the Father of Modern Missions, and the title is justified if we think only of the mighty impulse his life and labours gave to the Christian Church. It was principally owing to the letters Carey sent from India that the London Missionary Society was founded in 1795. The Scotch Missionary Society was established in the following year, and the Church Missionary Society in 1799. In that same year the Religious Tract Society was instituted, and the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804.

In one decade the Christian Church awoke to her privileges and responsibilities, rose from the dust, put on her strength, and the enthusiasm and success of the apostolic days returned. It was a glorious era, a veritable coming again of the Christ of God. The Saviour graciously fulfilled His promise, and to a Church obedient to His great commission He still says, "I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age."

XV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

All of our young people are or should be familiar with the story of William Carey, but we are not nearly so familiar with the story of Adoniram Judson, and yet he was one of the greatest missionary heroes, who should never be forgotten. All that Carey was to England, Judson was to America. It was owing to Carey's persistent faith that the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of Great Britain was founded, and it was due to Judson that the Baptists of America banded themselves together for the proclamation of the gospel in heathen lands. We cannot think of India without Carey, nor of Burmah without Judson.

Judson's life should have much more extended notice than can be given in this short sketch. He was born in one of the suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts, on August 9th, 1788. As a child he was very precocious, learning to read when he was only three years old. At school he was so proficient in languages that his schoolfellows nicknamed him "Old Virgil dug up," and at the University he graduated when he was only nineteen. Though he had been brought up in a Christian home, he was carried away by the prevailing scepticism of that age. On a riding tour through the Northern States, the landlord of a lonely country inn apologised for putting him in a room next to

that in which a man was very ill. Judson, during the night, thought of the sick man, and pondered the question of another life. In the morning, to his deep sorrow, he learned that the sick man who had died in the night, was his greatest student friend. Returning home, he yielded himself to Christ and joined the Congregational Church.

He entered a Theological College to prepare for the ministry, and soon resolved to become a missionary to the heathen. In doing so he declined a tutorship in the University, and an offer to become the colleague of the minister of the largest church in Boston. At this time there was no Foreign Mission Society in America, but as Judson and three other young men were eager to go to a foreign field, the Congregational Church appointed a Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In August, 1811, Judson was accepted as a missionary for some part of Asia. In February, 1812, he was married to Miss Ann Hasseltine, who became one of the bravest and most gifted of missionaries, and on the 19th of the same month they sailed for Calcutta.

During the long voyage of four months Judson studied the New Testament to see if it agreed with the direction of the Board of Commissioners that he was to baptize credible believers and their households. The more he read, the more convinced he became that he could only baptize converts. His wife, through earnest independent studies, reached the same conclusion.

On landing at Calcutta he was warmly welcomed by the Serampore missionaries, and on September 6th, 1812, Mr. and Mrs. Judson were baptized in the Calcutta Baptist Church. At once he sent word to the Congregational Mission of his changed beliefs, and proposed to stay

in the East and support himself by his own labour, at the same time carrying on missionary work. But the East India Company would not allow this, and ordered Mr. and Mrs. Judson to return to America. This they were unwilling to do, and after a time of much hardship, received permission to go to the Isle of France. When the tidings of Judson's altered position reached America, the Baptists were aroused to action and speedily was originated the American Baptist Missionary Union.

In June, 1813, Judson landed at Rangoon and entered on the glorious task of the evangelisation of Burmah. For ten years he laboured at Rangoon, mastering the language, preparing a grammar, beginning the translation of the New Testament, preaching Christ as opportunities occurred, and, seven years after he left America, baptized the first Burman convert. But the Viceroy of Rangoon was opposed to the work of the missionaries, so Judson and his companions went to Ava, the capital of Burmah, 350 miles from Rangoon to lay the whole matter before the Emperor. Permission to introduce Christianity into Burmah was scornfully refused, and Judson returned disappointed to Rangoon.

In 1824 war broke out between England and Burmah, and Judson was imprisoned on suspicion of being in collusion with the English. For twenty-one months he endured all the horrors of an Oriental prison; the filth was indescribable, his fetters weighed fourteen pounds, and at night the feet of all the prisoners were drawn up by a pulley so that they could not possibly escape. In all this dreary time his heroic wife, with her babe in her arms, visited Judson daily, and constantly pleaded with high officials for his release.

The treaty of peace was signed early in 1826. The British desired Judson to accept a position as interpreter, offering him a large salary, but he declined the offer and renewed his mission work with unabated ardour. A new town sprang up, named Amherst, under British protection, and here Judson determined to plant his mission. The following year his noble, devoted wife died of fever while Judson was again at Ava, vainly pleading with the Emperor to grant religious freedom. A second town under British protection was begun at Maulmain, that rapidly grew in importance, and the mission was transferred to that centre. After eight years' loneliness, Judson married Mrs. Boardman, the widow of one of his colleagues, and her work among the Karens is one of the finest romances of Foreign Missions.

After being twenty-eight years in Burmah Judson's health failed, and he visited America. He was welcomed everywhere with unbounded enthusiasm. In 1846 he returned to Maulmain and worked steadily on till April 3rd, 1850. His strength was spent. It was hoped that a sea voyage would benefit him, but he rapidly sank, and on April 12th he passed away and was buried at sea.

He had the joy of translating the whole Bible into Burmese, and of compiling a Burmese Dictionary. When he died there were sixty-three churches established among the Burmans and Karens, under the oversight of 163 pastors, most of them natives, with a membership of over 7000 baptized believers. Christianity was firmly entrenched in Burmah, and the American Foreign Mission Society had prospered wonderfully. As in Carey's case, the work abroad had greatly stimulated the work at home.

XVI.

JOHANN GERHARD ONCKEN, THE APOSTLE OF GERMANY.

In the beginning of the 19th century the wars of Napoleon caused terrible distress in all Northern Europe. In that time of trouble a boy was born on January 26th, 1800, at Oldenburg, a town not far from the North Sea. He received the name, Johann Gerhard Oncken, and was afterwards described by C. H. Spurgeon as "the Apostle Paul of Germany." His father died an exile in England, and the boy was brought up by his grandmother. A merchant from Scotland, on a visit to the continent, saw the lad and took him with him on his return home. Oncken was then 14 years old, and for five years remained in Scotland. Then he removed to London, where, in a Methodist chapel he yielded his life to Christ.

A society had recently been formed in London for evangelistic work on the Continent, and in 1823 this Society sent Oncken as its first missionary to Hamburg. Rationalism prevailed in Europe, and the missionary's first task was to distribute Bibles supplied by the society. As soon as possible, he began to preach. The meetings, held in a house, attracted great numbers. Then the city authorities inter-

fered. The preacher was heavily fined, and the meetings were stopped. In 1828 Oncken opened a bookshop as agent of the Edinburgh Bible Society. He continued as agent of the society for fifty years, during which time he distributed 2,000,000 Bibles.

In the year in which he became agent of the Bible Society, he married a lady from London. Oncken was not permitted to carry on his work without hindrance. Again and again he was fined, and at times imprisoned. During one of these imprisonments for a term of four weeks, his little daughter, aged five, died, and his lonely English wife had to arrange for her burial.

When he was little more than 30 years old, Oncken was led to study the question of baptism, and on April 22nd, 1834, at night time, secretly, to avoid persecution, was baptized with his wife and eight others in the river Elbe by Professor Sears, who was on a visit from America. On the following day these baptized believers were constituted a church, with Oncken as pastor. Thus began the Baptist churches of modern days in Germany.

But the city authorities were opposed to the Baptist Church. The pastor was summoned before the Chief of Police, and was told that the Baptist heresy was to be rooted out. Oncken quietly said, "You will find that all your labour will be in vain." Then, said the Chief, "It shall not be my fault; as long as I can move my little finger it shall be raised against you." The pastor calmly answered, "I think, sir, you do not see what I see, which is, not a little finger, but the mighty arm of God."

Oncken and all his friends were offered a free passage to America, but he refused to leave Hamburg. He was again imprisoned, and the church meetings were broken up. After his release he visited Berlin, and a church was founded there. In 1842 a great fire destroyed a third of the city of Hamburg. The Baptist Church had just rented a warehouse of four stories to serve as a Bible depot, and a place of meeting, and at once they offered three stories to the authorities for those made homeless by the fire. This led to the beginning of toleration.

From that time Oncken began a series of missionary tours in Prussia, Denmark, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Russia and Turkey. Within four years there were four churches with 120 members under his care. By 1844 he had sent forth seventeen preachers, organised twenty-six churches, and their communicants numbered 1500.

In 1849 the Hamburg Baptist College was commenced, with a course of study extending over four years, and before Oncken's death 200 young men had been trained for the work of the ministry. Opposition still continued. In one of his letters Oncken wrote, "Our baptisms all took place under cover of night, and on my missionary tours, which were frequently extensive, I was banished successively from almost every state in Germany. I could never travel as an honest man by daylight, but was compelled to journey on foot in the darkness, to hold services, examine candidates, administer the ordinances and form churches in the dead of night, and take care to be across the frontiers before break of day, for fear of my pursuers."

England and America helped the struggling churches in Denmark and Germany, and in course of time they were allowed liberty of

worship. Oncken visited America and England, and on one of his visits to Edinburgh he met Dr. Guthrie, who asked him, "How many missionaries have you?" Oncken gave the number of members, 7000. "Beg your pardon," said the doctor, "I asked the number of missionaries." "I know," was the reply, "but we consider every member a missionary." "That's the thing," said Dr. Guthrie, "that's the way to evangelise the world." With such a spirit it is no wonder that in spite of all persecution within Oncken's lifetime the membership of the Baptist churches grew to 100,000.

In 1881 Oncken's health failed, and he gave up his work and retired to Zurich in Switzerland. There he enjoyed a peaceful eventide, and on January 2nd, 1884, quietly passed to higher service. On the centenary of his birth a tablet was placed over his grave, with this inscription: "In memory of their never-to-be-forgotten first pastor, Johann Gerhard Oncken, the founder of churches of immersed believers in Germany, this memorial tablet was erected on his 100th birthday, January 26th, 1900, by the grateful First Baptist Church in Hamburg."

XVII.

BAPTISTS IN THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO-DAY.

The foregoing sketches are only a few of those that might be written telling of the persistent advocacy of Baptist principles, at times in face of great opposition, in various countries and at different times during the Christian centuries, and we may fittingly bring the series to a close by a brief statement of the present position of Baptists in the world.

The days of active persecution are past. Religious liberty for which Baptists have always pleaded, is well-nigh universal. The Sovereignty of Christ and the supremacy of His Word are acknowledged as never before. Democratic principles are in the ascendant. All lands lie open to missionary service. Our times are big with opportunities and challenge us to attempt great things for God. Are Baptists ready to respond to the challenge and avail themselves of their privileges?

Realising the need for concerted action, at the First Baptist World Congress held in London in 1905, under the presidency of Dr. Alexander Maclaren, the Baptist World Alliance was formed on July 17th

of that year. The purpose of the Alliance is set forth in the Preamble of its Constitution as follows:—

"The Baptist World Alliance, extending over every part of the world, exists in order more fully to show the essential oneness of Baptist people in the Lord Jesus Christ, to impart inspiration to the brotherhood, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service and co-operation among them; it being understood that this Alliance shall in no way interfere with the independence of the churches or assume the administrative functions of existing organisations."

That is, just as our autonomous Baptist churches are voluntarily linked together in Associations or Unions, so the Baptist Associations and Unions of the world are voluntarily banded together in a World Alliance.

Since the Alliance was formed twenty-three years ago, it has done much to unite and inspire the Baptists of all lands. The fourth great Congress, held at Toronto, Canada, in July, 1928, was attended by 7000 delegates representing Baptists in 65 countries of the world. When the roll of the nations was called and their representatives from all quarters of the world made brief response, it was possible to imagine a mighty host and to hear the steady tramp, tramp of millions upon millions of Baptists marching in unbroken columns to the great task to which they have been called. The directory of the World Alliance for 1928 gives the following summary of Statistics of Baptist churches:—

Summary of Statistics and Information regarding National Unions, Conventions, Associations and Mission Fields.

Continent	Churches.	Pastors and Missionaries.	Members of Churches.	Sunday Scholars.
Europe	8,190	4,137	637,805*	675,976*
Asia	3,143	1,420†	343,165	187,293
Africa	1,234	339‡	72,530	27,626
America—				
North	56,721	40,531	8,497,590	5,236,377
Central and West Indies	642	263	61,725	55,366
South	422	187	34,141	26,150
Australasia	453	368	33,001	43,437
Totals	70,805	47,245	9,679,957	6,252,225

* Excluding Russia. † Native Helpers over 13,000.
‡Native Helpers and Local Preachers about 3000.

These figures, carefully compiled, fill us with gratitude and pride. When we compare them with the records of the past, we can only bow in humble thankfulness and acknowledge the goodness of God. He has honoured the fidelity of our fathers, and the reward given to us is an opportunity for wider service. There is still need to maintain the principles for which unnumbered martyrs laid down their lives. There is still need for our Baptist witness. The Captain of our salvation still leads us on:

He has sounded forth the trumpet, that shall never call "Retreat!"
O be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant my feet.

Date Due

Wholly set up an Limited,

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649

All items are subject to recall

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

GTU Library
3 2400 00591 5297

KX2
W65

37719